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d i f f e r e n t S u b s t a n c e s .

By R. E. R A S P E .

In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas. OVID.

L O N D O N . M D C C L X X V I .

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LONDON: WOODWARD & CO. 1851

T O

SIR JOHN ST. AUBYN, BART.

Member of Parliament for the Borough
of PENRYN.

S I R,

THIS account of the present state of Mr. Tassie's collection has a natural claim to your attention. You was the first in this kingdom who saw its tendency, approved of the indefatigable spirit of the artist, sympathized with the enlightened magnificence of one of the greatest Sovereigns in Europe, and ordered a select part of this collection to be executed for your study and amusement; that from these *fac-similes* of ancient and modern art you might judge by yourself of its respective merit, and thus, even in this instance, be the more engaged

to admire respectable ages and nations that are no more, and to honour and cherish those which have at last sprung from their ashes, and have nobly attempted to surpass them.

I sincerely congratulate you on this disposition of your mind and heart, for, in publick as well as private life, it will always attend you as a friendly genius; and like the Dæmon of Socrates, which the profane could not form an idea of, suggest to you both the agreeable knowledge, and the more important enjoyment and practice of whatever is true, right, just and beautiful. I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient

humble servant,

London,
Oct. 7, 1785.

R. E. R A S P É.

THE origin of the art of engraving on hard and precious stones cannot be traced to any particular nation of antiquity; for its first mechanical rudiments, that is to say, the art of grinding, polishing, boring, and shaping them into various forms, were certainly taught by necessity (the great mother of invention) to many tribes of Savages, who had never any intercourse; nor can we in any manner ascertain which of them first emerged from barbarity, and improved the rude arts of necessity into arts of taste and luxury. Stone hatchets, points of arrows, or other missile weapons, chissels, and ornaments of the same form, often curiously cut, polished, and perforated, and made of flint, porphyry, basaltes, jasper, nephritick or other very hard stones, are found in the sepulchral monuments of the most ancient Savages of Europe and Asia, of whom, on that account, we are fully warranted to think what Tacitus, that excellent observer, relates of one of their tribes, the Germans, *that they were unacquainted with the use of metals* *, which would have furnished them with better materials for tools and weapons. The same kind of stone weapons,

* Nescio Diine irati an propitii Germanis negarint metalla. Sed quis scrutatus est? *Taciti Germania.*

tools, and ornaments, are for similar reasons, at this very day, formed and used by many of the lately discovered South Sea islanders, who, in consequence of their sequestered situation, are still many ages behind the European and most Asiatic nations, being in an infant state of culture with regard to arts and their improvements.

They will, like our barbarous ancestors in Europe, generally set a high value upon these first essays of art, and for very good reasons. Are they not actually the most precious and costly things they are possessed of? Their safety, their preservation, and most of their useful arts, depend upon them; and the trouble of making a single hatchet must be very tedious and great indeed; it must engage them continually for months and years. In that self-taught infant state of the art of engraving, they have nothing but the active powers of their hands, with sand and other hard stones, to conquer the almost invincible hardness of the materials. Their scarcity, fine colour, and smooth polish, must of course give them an additional value; nor is it in any respect to be wondered at, that the high and bright coloured stones in particular should catch the eyes of Savages, who are always fond of gaudy colours and ornaments; or the attention of priests and quacks, who have always made the most of the superstition and ignorance of the people, and would soon make them into amulets, talismans, and grigris. In these works of the first infancy of the art of cutting and engraving, we have nothing to admire but the equal powers of mankind in aiming at perfection, let them live ever so remote from each other; the similarity of the effects of necessity; the invincible patience wherewith they
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are executed, and the astonishing neatness with which some of them are finished. I have seen old battle-axes of flint and basaltes, which were found in the inner parts of Germany, near Hamelen on the Weser, where Germanicus fought a successful battle against the Cheruscians *, and similar battle-axes from Mexico, and the South Sea islands; the edge, polish, and execution of which is really astonishing. Such is the particular excellence of a long cylindrical ornament in the possession of the widow of the late celebrated *Captain James Cook*, who, in his second circumnavigation of the world, brought it from New Zealand, where the warriors or great men wear such ornaments in their ears, with as consequential an air as our great men wear their silk ribbands. It is made of a beautiful transparent green talcous stone, which is exceedingly hard, and amongst the naturalists goes under the name of *Lapis Nephriticus*, *Igiada* or *Jade*, and since the late South Sea voyages is commonly called a *New Zealand stone*. Its fine colour is between the emerald and chrysolite, and its uncommon clearness and transparency make it, in its kind, and in the eyes of the naturalists, as inestimable as any uncommonly large and clear diamond possibly can be in the interested opinion of the East India companies, the Portuguese, and their drudges the merchants and lapidaries, who, in that mercenary quality, have done the business of their employers, and, by exaggerated praises of the diamond above many finer stones, have raised it to an unconscionable price, even beyond what it cost an hundred years ago, in the times of *Tavernier*.

* *Dissertations couronnées par L'Academie de Berlin sur la question, Jusqu' où les Romains ont ils pénétré en Allemagne.*

The extraordinary beauty and size of Mrs. Cook's Jewel, added to its scarcity, make it undoubtedly of very great value, even without any regard to its very curious form and workmanship, for which we mentioned it here. It is, as before said, of a cylindrical form, about ten inches long, half an inch thick, gently bent towards the under, and tapering towards the upper end, where it is perforated to admit the string which fastened it to the ear. So that, considering the very great hardness and high polish of the stone, it must have been a work of immense labour, and may justly be looked upon as one of the greatest master-pieces of this first stage of the art of grinding, cutting, or engraving.

During this period, the whole art must have been very much confined; and, if the workmen at that time ever ventured upon engraving, which I apprehend they never did, their attempts must have been exceedingly rude and unsuccessful. For what tool, or what method, could they possibly have used with success? With a sharp hard stone they might surely scratch straight lines upon the polished surface of those of a softer texture; nay, with a diamond they might make such lines and dots even upon the hardest. But is that engraving?

The art of turning, especially the drill and wheel, must absolutely have preceded the first engravings on fine and hard stones. Could we ascertain its first invention or application to the fine arts, we might, with some probability, fix the period, and the nation, who, by making the art of cutting stones more easy, and giving us the command of the hardest substances, improved it into the more comprehensive art of engraving,

ing, which of course would soon express the ideas, opinions, manners, and taste, of the respective ages and nations, who made use of it. *Pliny*, to whom we are beholden for so many valuable accounts of the arts of antiquity, tells us the name of the Greek artist *qui primus toreuticen aperuit*, who first opened the *Toreutick*, as the Greeks called the art of Turning. He mentions *Dedalus*; and, in the manner he tells the story, it is plausible enough; for by his account, *Dedalus*, who, as he says, invented the *Toreutick*, was the first that ever attempted and succeeded in giving life and motion to his statues, by separating their extremities, the legs and arms, from the blocks, which his predecessors, the Egyptians, never could accomplish by the chissel. By the application of the *Toreutick*, or the drill, it became an easy operation, as easy as undercutting the parts, of which the Egyptians, and other nations unacquainted with this application of the turning tool, could not possibly form an idea. Whoever is acquainted with the mechanical operations of the statuary, and engraver of hard stones, must be convinced with us, that both arts were exceedingly deficient before the turning tools were invented, or applied to these purposes. Here then we see a great epocha for the arts; ascribed in a very high antiquity to the artists of a nation, which certainly surpassed every other in statuary; and, in particular, its oldest masters of Egypt, who, for want of that application of the turning tool, always kept the limbs, legs, and arms, of their figures close to the body, as if they were afraid to break or loose them. We know that the Greeks are great boasters, and that *Pliny* has often told us very improbable stories on the score of their discoveries: but must we always suspect them?

or always tax *Pliny* with want of judgement, and too much credulity? Is there any circumstance whatever, either in this account of the improvements by *Dedalus*, or in the monuments and historical records of other nations of antiquity, that could in the least invalidate his account?

The Greeks were unquestionably the first improvers of statuary and the fine arts, and on that account we may safely ascribe to them even the improvement of the art of cutting stones by the tools and principles of the art of turning. The words of *Pliny* bear that construction. *Dedalus* was the first who opened the *Toreutick*; which is, who first shewed the extensive use of the turning tools, by applying them to statuary and the polite arts.

This assertion implies, that, before the period of *Dedalus*, there was cutting, grinding, and polishing, of hard stones, but no engraving; and that the Greeks were the first inventors of it. We are fully satisfied, that the seal rings of the Patriarchs and some Egyptian gems, supposed to have been cut before the use of the wheel, cannot be fairly urged against us; for the former might be in metal, and the latter cut by the wheel; for saying they were done with another tool is a very precarious supposition, which of itself will fall to the ground, if we consider that we do not know of any such tool, and that the wheel will execute the flat work and hatchings of these Egyptian gems, as well, and more easily than any other kind of work.

The friends of antiquity need not be afraid of our assertion which we give here for no more than what it really is, as a rational conjecture founded on the
nature

nature of the art we are speaking of, on a consistent tradition of the Greeks, who excelled in it, and on a circumstance which has great weight with us, and ought to have on the unprejudiced; which is, that the warmest advocates for the highest antiquity of the art of engraving cannot muster, from the records of history, or the cabinets of antiquity, any gem or engraving on hard stone, fairly proved to have been executed before the period of Dedalus, which goes into very remote antiquity indeed. Of this we are fully convinced by the attentive perusal of those gems in particular, which bear external and internal marks of what we believe to be of the highest antiquity, and of the oldest style of engraving.

The real period of time when some Egyptian Hieroglyphical figures and inscriptions were engraven on hard stones, and when some Persian or Persepolitan cylinders with Chinese characters were executed, is to all appearance, and as far as we know, undeterminable, and in the dark. Is it on that account to be looked upon as anterior to that of the oldest Greek gems? the remotest antiquity of which can be ascertained by the subjects represented on them, and by the inscriptions which leave us no doubt about them. Such reasoning would and must always appear as absurd as the etymology of an old pedant, who told his schoolboys that *Lucus* comes *à non lucendo*.

We dismiss this subject, in order to observe that the high prices which the ancients paid for the better sorts of engraved gems, and the high estimation in which they always were held by men of taste and fashion, must very early have suggested the idea of taking them off in wax, sulphur, plaister of Paris, fine clay and in

coloured glass-compositions, especially the latter, which imitating the colours and brilliancy of the originals, would exactly show the beauty of their workmanship, and accordingly make them fit for most of the purposes for which they were collected. The famous old glass manufactories of the Phenicians and Egyptians *, which furnished trinkets and ornaments, for their extensive trade, even with the remotest and most barbarous nations †, would of course furnish to their sagacious neighbours the Greeks the very best materials for speculation. They made rich coloured glasses and enamels ; and their traders dispersed them over all the world, in various forms, even in that of glass beads, and we apprehend for purposes similar to those for which our Christian slave-traders manufacture and export them to the coast of Guinea and Madagascar ; as such coloured old glass beads, apparently of Phenician workmanship, and erroneously called Druids-beads, are frequently found in the urns and sepulchral monuments of those barbarous nations which the Phenicians formerly visited, for the laudable purpose of bartering their baubles for amber, gold, tin, slaves, girls, or other valuable commodities. Could the Greeks have possibly neglected the broad hint given to their ingenuity ? They surely made the most of it in their various Mosaic *plastic*, engraved works and ornaments ; and so did all their Colonies, and all the nations who cultivated Greek arts, taste and ingenuity. The famous Barbarini vase, which Sir William Hamilton lately brought to this kingdom, and sold to her Grace

* See Michaelis de Vitro in Novis Comment. Soc. Regiæ Goettingensis,

† Schmidt de Rossan sur le Commerce de l' Egypte Diss. couronnée par l'Académie Royale des Inscript. & des Belles Lettres.

the Dutcheſs of Portland, is a noble inſtance of the great powers of their art and ingenuity in the improvement of cheap materials ; and, to come nearer to the point, thouſands of ancient impreſſions of gems in coloured glaſs (or paſtes as they are called by the Virtuoſi) have been found among the ruins of Alexandria, Rome, Naples, Puzzuolo, and other ſeats of ancient ſplendor and magnificence. Numerous collections have been formed of them ; and many of the greateſt maſter-pieces of ancient art are only preſerved by theſe antique paſtes, and being of the ſame uſe as the loſt originals, they juſtly become of the ſame value. Inſtances of this are found in the Florentine Muſeum, in Stoſch's work on ancient gems with inſcriptions, in Winckelman's deſcription of Stoſch's cabinet, and chiefly in Mr. Charles Townley's noble collection of antiquities. Nor ſeems the art of making paſte impreſſions to have been loſt in that long period of Gothic or rather Monkish dullneſs which darkened Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire ; for Heraclius, who to all appearance lived in the IXth century, and wrote a book *De Artibus Romanorum*, which I publiſhed ſome years ago from an old manuſcript of Trinity College at Cambridge*, that teaches, in very plain though not elegant terms, how to make paſtes, and imitations of gems, the originality, goodneſs, and authenticity of which the good Chriſtians of thoſe times knew ſo little of, that good and bad gems and ſtones are often found promiſcuouſly ſet in the ornaments of their crowns, altars, relick-boxes, and other ſuch ſtate and church-furniture. Large lumps of coloured glaſs were then

* Critical Eſſay on Oil Painting—with Theophilus de Arte pingendi, & Erueſius de Artibus Romanorum, by R. E. Raſpe, London 1783, 4to. Cadell.

often sold for fine emeralds, rubies, and sapphires. The famous emerald of the abbey of Reichenaw near Constance, though a present of Charlemain, has of late proved to be a piece of glass *. The equally celebrated emerald vase in the cathedral at Genoa came into the possession of the Genoese as an equivalent for a great sum of money in the year 1101, at the taking of Cæsarea in the Holy Land; nor was any imposition suspected, for in the year 1319 they pawned it for 1200 marcs of gold; and yet it is but a lump of glass †.

In these times the art of making coloured glass was not lost, but the knowledge of its principles and the taste in its application. It was kept a secret in the hands of a few friars, or in the possession of a few selfish Jews, Greeks, or other merchants, and it furnished on one hand ample materials for imposition, and on the other but clumsy and tasteless ornaments, till at the restoration of the learning, sense, and taste of the ancients, and chiefly in the times of Lawrence de Medici and Pope Leo X. it began to become again an object of speculation for artists and men of letters.

To this period belong the various mechanical and chemical true and false directions for making coloured glass, which are collected in *Boetius de Boot*, in his *Gemmarum & Lapidum Historia*, Lugd. Bat. 1647, p. 66, and which Father *Kircher* has inserted with some improvements in the XII. Book of his *Mundus Subterraneus*, in the subdivision of the same inscribed *de Arte Vitriaria*. *Neri*, *Kunckel*, and *Merret*, in their respective treatises on the art of making glass, so far from neglecting this branch have given such instruc-

* See Andreae's Letters on Switzerland.

† Mr. La Condamine's Diff. in *Memoires de l'Acad. Roy. de Paris* de 1757.

tions upon it as were consistent with the then state of chemical knowledge and taste : and if but very few men of taste, or artists of the XVIth and XVIIth century, such as *Francisco Vicecomite**, have made themselves conspicuous by collections of pastes of ancient gems, it proves no more than that the art of making them was carried on secretly, or had not sufficient encouragement, till the late Duke of Orleans's exquisite taste for the polite arts gave it, in the earlier part of this century, a kind of well-deserved fashionable sanction, by amusing himself, and employing that celebrated chemist Mr. Homberg, in making pastes from the King of France's, his own, and other collections of gems. The elder *Clackant*, a French engraver of some note, who died in Paris in 1781, learnt this art from his Royal Highness, to whose household his father or he seems to have belonged. *Mademoiselle Feloix à la Baleine* Rue de l'Arbre sec at Paris (who has a collection of 1800 impressions) has practised it for years, and still carries it on, by disposing of pastes made from them. She had her knowledge of the art from her father, who, in the quality of *Garçon de Chambre* to the Regent, had often assisted in the laboratory of his master ; so that the Duke of Orleans, though not the inventor, is justly to be looked upon as the great encourager and promoter of the art. The elder Baron Stosch, a Prussian nobleman, travelled over all Europe about that time, in quest of originals, and impressions of antique gems. The Duke's and Homberg's successful attempt, which were so favourable to the Baron's enquiries, could not possibly fail to raise both his attention and admiration, if it did not serve to instruct him in the practice where-

* Mariette Tr. des Pierres gravées, vol. I. p. 93.

with he certainly was acquainted; for one of his servants, *Christian Debn*, settled at Rome, where, till lately that he died, he carried on the business of making and selling his well-known sulphur impressions, and pastes. Of these he had upon the whole collected about 2500, which were arranged in scientific order, and became more useful by an Italian description which was published at Rome by Dolce. Being taken from the most accessible French and Italian cabinets, and spreading from Rome as the centre and metropolis of the fine arts of antiquity, they have unquestionably extended the taste and knowledge of the art of engraving, and laid the foundation of all the similar collections and manufactories that have been set up in Italy, and other countries, chiefly since the years 1755 and 1765, when the genius and enlightened enthusiasm of Count *Caylus**, and Abbé Winckelman†, gave a new turn to the study of antiquity, and drew the attention of the public towards its wisdom and excellence in the arts,

* Recueil d' Antiquités.

Tableaux tirés d' Homere.

————— de Virgile.

Dissertations dans les Memoires de l'Academie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres.

† Letters on the Imitation of Greek Artists, translated into English by Fusely.

Essay on Allegory.

Remarks on Architecture.

Letters on the Herculean Discoveries.

Letters to Baron Berg on the Sense of Beauty.

Histoire de l'Art des Anciens traduite de l'Allemand par Mr. Hubs, 3 vols. 4to.

Description des pierres gravées de Baron Stosch, Florence, 4to.

Monumenti antichi inediti, Roma, 2 vol, folio.

Familiar Correspondence, published by Prof. Heyne, and translated into French.

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in a more effectual and rational manner than had ever been attempted before. They no longer remained buried in the dross and rubbish of the voluminous compilations of tasteless school-masters and antiquaries, or neglected and but partially understood by illiterate artists. From their respective learning and acquaintance with the arts, they began to be more generally understood, and more rationally admired. The artists, whatever accidentally might have been formerly their professional excellence and sense of beauty, perfection, and propriety, learnt from their writings, that the standards and models of their respective arts are commendable for more than their admirable simplicity, proportion, and execution, and that their excellence lies deeper than their surface, in the profound sense, wisdom, and learning of the ancients, which animates and enlivens their works in the same manner as the living genius, and the modest virtues of a noble generous mind, animate and brighten the external beauties and perfections of the human body.

Men of letters and philosophers, on their part, now found something similar to what the proud and conceited Metaphysicians must have felt, when modern anatomy first demonstrated the wonderful mechanism of the human body, and the nakedness and shallowness of many of their physiological and scholastic dreams; that the statues, gems, buildings, and works of the enlightened ancients, are more than simple representations and proofs of their wisdom, genius, and folly; that in themselves they are master-pieces of workmanship, which pedantic ignorance may admire and stare at, but consummate professional wisdom of artists only can produce and account for.

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All Europe at the same time began to be sensible, that the study of antiquity stands upon a more respectable basis, than that of an innocent amusement of idle curiosity; for it is the study of mankind, as it was in former ages; and their opinions and works, well understood, will shew us not only in what gradual progression they arrived *at*, or deviated *from*, truth and perfection, but likewise by what means our philosophers, legislators, and artists, ought to estimate, imitate, or surpass them.

That it might be reduced into the form of a science, was evident from the works of the two philosophers abovementioned; but it was as evident, that this desirable object could never be obtained without the joint efforts of learning, taste, and art, going hand in hand; and in particular with regard to the arts of antiquity, that any attempt to judge of them, or to transplant them from the East, or from Italy, into other climates, must prove unsuccessful without intuitive knowledge.

This was surely to be obtained but very imperfectly from drawings, prints, and copies; accordingly, vast sums of money have been expended, chiefly in this kingdom and the North of Europe, in order to bring the arts of Egypt, Greece, and Italy, over the Alps, by various collections of originals, or such copies and imitations as give a faithful idea of them. Even some of the noblest buildings and temples of antiquity have been raised at Potsdam and Berlin, and embellish the parks and country seats of our English nobility.

Armies of ancient and Roman statues have been made to emigrate to Russia, Prussia, Saxony, France, and England; and as many first-rate statues and busts are not to be bought

bought for money, and the expence of original marbles is rather beyond the reach of private fortunes, *Plaster-casts* of them have been procured, and set up in almost every academy and country of Europe ; even something like a general collection of ancient and modern sculpture has been attempted in plaster at Manheim, and nearly accomplished by the late Signor *Farsetti*, in his beautiful villa at Scala, near Venice. From a similar principle, ample encouragement has been given to the art of taking impressions of gems, and engraved hard stones ; and, accordingly, both the art of engraving and of taking impressions have, since that time, been very much improved.

Mr. *Reiffenstein*, at Rome, made very successful experiments for taking off exact impressions, and perfectly to imitate various coloured Cameos, which for several reasons never can shew well when taken in wax, sulphur, plaster, or glass, of only one colour : the difficulties arising from their size and form, the various nature of the different sorts of glass, which are often inimical to each other, and do not well unite into different strata, were truly numerous ; nor could the completest success in this chemical and mechanical branch of the art produce a tolerable Cameo. Impressions or imitations, if unassisted by the tool of the engraver, do not succeed, because the undercutting and deep-work of most of the originals require to be filled up with clay or wax, that the moulds may come off safe without injuring them ; and accordingly the impressions from these moulds come off hard, and destitute of delicacy, sharpness, exactness, and precision of outline, till the underworking of the moulder is cut away ; but perseverance, and the assistance of able artists at
Rome,

Rome, have carried Mr. Reiffenstein through all these difficulties ; and he has had the satisfaction of succeeding in the arduous attempt, and producing impressions of variegated Cameos, which can hardly be distinguished from the originals.

The demand for Dehn's sulphurs and glass impressions became so great at that time, and their utility for the scholar, artist, and jeweller, so evident, that the art of making them rose in estimation in the same proportion ; and even eminent artists, such as Mr. Pichler, and others of Rome, think it no disgrace, but rather an advantage to their art, to assist the connoisseur with sulphur and glass-impressions of the ancient gems, or their own workmanship.

Mr. Lippert of Dresden, by profession a glazier, but born with a genius, taste, and zeal for the fine arts, which his acquaintance with Winckleman, Baron Hagedorn, and the most respectable members of the Academy of Painting, had blown into a flame, practised this art not unsuccessfully ; but finding no sufficient encouragement for his pastes of coloured glass, or rather local difficulties in making them well and cheap, and, moreover, being sensible that red or black sulphur-impressions have, beside many other imperfections, a false lustre on the surface, began to substitute in their place impressions, not of talc or clay, as we are told in the Edinburgh Encyclopedia, but of fine white alabaster or felinite plaister, which when carefully soaked in a solution of white Castile soap, then dried and rubbed over with a soft brush, take a very agreeable smooth polish, and shew the work to better advantage than red or black sulphurs.

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He published three different collections of these impressions, each of them containing one thousand numbers, and arranged in neat cabinets of various forms, which he sold at the rate of about thirty ducats a-piece, which is a great deal cheaper than any equal number of sulphurs can be procured either at Rome, Paris, or London; and to the merit of having much increased the number of Christian Dehn's, and Mademoiselle Feloix's collections, which were all inserted in his, he added that of employing some of the most learned men in Germany in the arrangement and description; the first thousand being arranged and described by the late professor Christ at Leipzig *, and the second and third by professor Heyne at Goettingen †. Nor did he stop here; but, to make the study of antiquity and the art more easy and acceptable to artists, he selected out of the whole collection of three thousand a smaller one of two thousand, of the best and most instructive subjects, of which he drew up and published a description ‡ in German, that does credit both to his learning and consummate knowledge of the arts.

All these spirited exertions were received with a generous and liberal attention on the part of the public; for there is hardly a good school, university, or public library, in Germany, in which these collections of Mr. Lippart have not been adopted, in their plans of public education, or set up for ornament and amusement.

* *Dactyliotheca Lippertiana*—auctore Christio. Lipsiæ, 4to.

† *Dactyl. Lippertiana Myrias*, II. III. Auctor. Heyne. Lipsiæ, 4to.

‡ *Lipperto Beschreibung seiner Dactyliothek*. Leipzig bey Breitkopf, 4to.

Whilst the learned and artists on the continent were thus employed, a foundation was laid in this country for our collection, which, in point of number, comprehensiveness of plan, execution, arrangement, and description, seems to have great advantages above all the foreign similar attempts.

Mr. *James Tassie*, a native of Glasgow, and born with a taste for architecture, and its various ornamental branches, but chiefly for modelling in wax, went to Ireland in the year 1763, and was soon employed by Dr. *Quin* of Dublin, to whose learning, encouragement, and fine taste in the polite arts, he owns himself much indebted for his knowledge and skill in moulding, and taking impressions of gems in coloured glass. He publicly carried on this business in London from the year 1766, when the Society for the encouragements of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, had given premiums for the best impressions of gems in coloured-glass, publicly acknowledging the art to be both new in this kingdom, and an object of general attention and encouragement: but as the premiums were not continued after that time, he could not become a competitor; however, upon shewing to the society the progress he had made in the art, and producing portraits of his modelling, with impressions of them in paste, and likewise Cameos, which not having been attempted before, they were so pleased, that they bestowed upon him a handsome bounty, as a reward and encouragement to persevere. The art thus rewarded has been practised ever since by Mr. Tassie with great attention on his part, and with considerable indulgence and encouragement from a generous people.

The great demand for his coloured pastes soon after was owing not only to their goodness, and the general reformation of taste in Europe, but likewise to the judicious discernment of the London jewellers, who introduced them into trade and fashion by setting them in seals, bracelets, necklaces, and various other trinkets. This, as might reasonably be expected, excited the emulation of the Birmingham speculators, and even Messrs. Wedgewood and Bentley, the great manufacturers of Staffordshire ware, became competitors; but so far from checking Mr. Tassie's success, or impeding his pursuits, served only as foils to his works, and to incite him still more to improve his art, his pastes and his collection, till he brought them to their present state of perfection.

The artist, scholar, or man of taste, could not be much improved, pleased, or satisfied with the Birmingham glass pastes; for the quality of the materials, and the lowness of their price, whatever they may be, cannot obliterate the unavoidable and indelible marks of hurry in which they must be made by the cheapest, and consequently the most illiterate workmen, in order to render them at a low rate. As the subjects are generally gawdy, it is painful to find them constantly injured in their outlines, or to behold gods and heroes, with noses, hands, feet, and other extremities, unmercifully mangled, or with little concern cut and polished away, as are the inscriptions which should accompany them.

It would be painful to dwell for a moment on an assertion in Messrs. Wedgewood and Bentley's catalogue of their ornamental works, 5th edit. published in 1779; but it has laid us under the necessity of saying what

the public, the artists, and connoisseurs, have always thought on the subject. That noble manufactory has been carried on much to their honour, and to the credit of this country ; and too much praise cannot be bestowed on their imitations of Etruscan, and other elegant vases and basso-relievos in black or various-coloured fine clays : but the writer of the catalogue has unluckily asserted, that their impressions of the *Antique Gems* are far above all other imitations ; while it is evident, that clays and their mixtures shrink, and consequently are less proper for giving correct impressions than either wax, sulphur, plaister, metal or glass, and it must be as evident that their being opaque, and of a dull gloomy colour, cannot place them in competition with coloured glass impressions which equally imitate the brightness and transparency of the originals.

Having thus given a short account of the different methods of taking impressions of gems, we must observe, that the collections of them, which have been hitherto formed and sold to the public, are all of them in many respects deficient. Even the most numerous collections in sulphur, or plaister, did not exceed three thousand, which was partly owing to a want of access to many valuable cabinets of originals, and likewise to a singular neglect of the barbarous ages, and of the works of modern artists, or of the characters by which their respective age and antiquity might be better ascertained, than by the traditional creed of bigoted antiquaries, or the still more fallacious accounts of crafty dealers.

For these reasons Mr. Tassie has not spared either expence or attention to make his collection as compleat

as

as possible, and as universal as the various purposes of jewellers, artists, men of taste, and philosophers, or rather the more extensive ideas of an enlightened philosophic age, seemed to require; and to the honourable patronage and encouragement of a generous public he owes his success. His collection, according to his old catalogue, amounted to no more than 3106 numbers, but at present consists of more than twelve thousand containing, besides those of Christian Dehn, Mademoiselle Feloix, and Lippert, the greatest part of those that were collected by the Elder Baron Stofch, besides many noble cabinets in this and other kingdoms, to which former artists had no access, and modern works, which other collectors had studiously neglected.

These singular and obvious advantages in number, variety, and contrast of ancient and modern works, have always been held in their proper estimation by the most enlightened connoisseurs, and seem to have been seen in their proper light by her Imperial Majesty the Empress of Russia; for, some time ago, her Majesty was graciously pleased to avail herself of them, and to order, that a collection should be formed of perfect and durable impressions of ancient and modern gems, as compleat and numerous as possible; secondly, that the gems from which they are taken, whether intaglios or cameos, should be executed in glass pastes, exactly imitating the respective colours of the originals; thirdly, that the collection should be scientifically arranged in suitable cabinets; and, fourthly, described in a corresponding catalogue, in which notice should be taken of their respective subjects, and all the particulars which can authenticate their history, and point out their merit, to promote the study of antiquities and the art of engraving.

The novelty, wisdom, grandeur, and splendour of her Majesty's plan require no farther comment; it is only to be compared to the equally liberal plans of Ptolemy and Attalus, who formed the first general libraries at Alexandria and Pergamus, that the learning, science, wisdom, and taste of every age and climate might be preserved, contrasted, and exhibited in proper light, to be improved, and if possible surpassed, by posterity: and since great advantages have been reaped from those first treasures of learning, and from their numerous imitations and the art of printing, similar advantages to the art of engraving must be derived from the rational study of antiquity in these her Majesty's cabinets of ancient and modern gems, and from the art of multiplying them by faithful and authentic pastes and impressions.

That this luminous idea should come from the North, and emanate from the bright glory which surrounds her Majesty's throne, is not so much a matter of surprize, as that it should hitherto have been unattempted ever since the revival of the arts; and that this kingdom, and a British artist, should have been honoured with the execution, is not less a proof of the extending empire of the Arts and the Muses, and of the favourable reception they have met in this country.

Mr. Tassie, duly sensible of the honour of executing these noble commands, and truly ambitious of performing them to her Majesty's satisfaction, availed himself of all the advantages which the improved state of chemistry, the various ornamental arts, and of learning, seemed to offer in this metropolis.

The

The impressions, being ordered to be made *true* and *durable*, were taken, not in wax, sulphur, plaister, metal, or clay, but in a beautiful white enamel composition, which is not subject to shrink or form air bladders; but strikes fire with steel, and takes a fine polish, which shews every stroke and touch of the art in higher perfection than any other substance.

The gems, whether Intaglios or Cameos, were moulded, and pastes were cast and finished from them in coloured glass, which, when the nature of the work would admit of it, were carefully polished; and where the colour, mixed colours, and nature of the respective originals, could be ascertained, they were imitated as compleatly as art can imitate them, so that many of the paste Intaglios and Cameos are so perfect, that our most eminent engravers, Messrs. Burch and Brown, are convinced, that such faithful imitations are *fac similes*, and can hardly be distinguished from the originals. When the colour and nature of the gems could not be authenticated, the pastes were executed in agreeable, and chiefly transparent colours, and constant attention was paid to the preservation of the outlines, extremities, attributes, and inscriptions.

The cabinets, in which these pastes and impressions were arranged in corresponding drawers, were executed by Mr. Roach, one of our best cabinet-makers, after the drawings of Mr. Wyat, whose taste as an architect is too well established in this kingdom, by many noble piles of his building, to want any of our more perishable commendations. The elegance and simplicity of their forms, the propriety of their external ornaments, which were basso relievos in white enamel, with gilt mouldings, set on a ground of green satin wood, and

the high finishing of the whole, qualified them, at any rate, for ornaments in the noble apartments of her Imperial Majesty's superb palace at Czarſko Zelo, where they have been placed.

As to the very laborious task of their arrangement and description, which fell to my ſhare, I have gone through it *con amore*. The arrangement will appear to be nearly the ſame with that of the Abbé Winckelman, in his deſcription of the gems of Baron Stofch; but as modern works were to be inſerted, and this collection to be more general and comprehensive, I made a few alterations, and added ſome diviſions to thoſe of the Abbé, which every perſon in the leaſt acquainted with antiquity will find ſuited to the ſubjects of ancient engraving or ſtatuary, any one, either ancient or modern, being to be found eaſily in the catalogue or correſponding collection, of which the following is the conſpectus.

C O N S P E C T U S

Of the ARRANGEMENT and DESCRIPTION.

I. ANCIENT ART AND ENGRAVINGS.

Egyptian.

Hieroglyphics.

Sacred Animals : *Hawks, Ibis, Apes, Sphinxes. Crocodiles,*
&c.

Divinities. *Ifis, Horus and Harpocrates Apis, Serapis,*
Osiris, Canopi, Anubis, &c.

Priests.

Basilidian Gnostic and other *Abraxas, Talismans and*
Amulets.

Oriental and Barbarous, ancient and modern
Engravings.

Persepolitan, Persian, Parthian, Phenician, Arabian, and unknown barbarous works. The Etruscan, of which a compleat List is given, having been proved most of them to be of the oldest Greek style, are classed with the Greek works.

Greek and Roman *Originals, Copies, and*
modern Imitations :

A. Mythology or fabulous Age.

Saturn, Time and Seasons.

Janus,

Cybele, Cities, Atys, &c.

Vesta and Vestals.

Olympus.

Olympus and Groups of Gods.

Jupiter. His Education; the Goat *Amalthea*, *Corybantes*,
Olympian, *Thunderer*, *Capitolinus*, *Muscarius*,
Pacificus, *Conseruator*, *Casius*, &c.
Attributes: *Thunderbolts*, *Eagles*, *Temples*,
 &c.

War with the Titans and Giants.

Affections and Intrigues:

Juno, *Peacocks*, *Temples*, *Leda* and
Swan, *Europa*, and *Bull*; *Hebe*; *Ga-*
nymedes, *Io*, and *Argus*; *Danae*, &c.

Ammon.

Pluto and *Proserpine*, or *Serapis* and *Jupiter*,
Inferus: *Hell*, *Sisyphus*, *Ixion*, *Tityus*, *Tantalus*,
Cerberus, *Fates* or *Parcae*, *Furies*, &c.

Pallas, *Minerva*, and *Bellona*: *Atchievements*, *At-*
tributes: *Temples*, *Owls*, &c.

Ceres—(See likewise *Abundance* and *Bonus*
Eventus). *Triptolemus*: *Sacrifices* to *Ceres*:
Attributes: *Ears of Corn*, *Ants*, *Reapers*, *Horns*
of Abundance.

Flora and *Flowers*.

Pomona.

Diana and *Ephesian Diana*; *Acteon*, *Endymion*,
Lunus, *Hunters*. See *Animals*.

Mercury; *Caduceus*; *Rams*; *winged feet*; *Herma-*
phroditus and *Salmacis*.

Neptune: *Amphitrite*; *Thetis*; *Tritons*, *Nereus*; *Ne-*
reids; *Scylla*; *Palemon*, *Glaucus*. *Sea Monsters*,
Sea Horses, *Dolphins*, *Ancient Navy*, *Ships*, *Sea*
Ports, *Rivers* and *Fountains*.

Apollo, *Latona*, *Niobe*, *Chiron*, *Marfyas*, *Midas*, *Hya-*
cinthus, *Daphne*, *Coronis*; *Attributes of Apollo*:
Lyres, *Griffins*, *Ravens*, *Sacrifices*.

Muses; *Theatre* and *Comedians*; *Masks*.

Phoebus,

Phoebus, Helius, and Sun; Phaeton; Zodiac and Constellations, Castor and Pollux, &c. Mithras; Aurora and Cephalus.

Esculapius and Telesphorus; Hygeia and Health.

Bacchus; Dionysian Bulls; Ciffus; Ariadne; Bacchanalian Vintages and Sacrifices to Bacchus; Silenus and old Fauns; young male and female Fauns; Bacchantes; Female Dancers; Menades; Centaurs; &c.

Pan, Satyrs, Sylvans; Luperci; Sacrifices to Pan.

Priapi, Spintbriae, &c.

Hercules; Io and Omphale.

Venus; Graces; Adonis; Vulcan; Mars; Anchises.

Cupid and Psyche.

Mars; Heads in Helmets; Warriors; Consultations; Battles; Victory, Triumphs, Trophies, conquered Provinces, Arms; Gymnastic games and exercises, Discoboli, Cestarii, Athletes, Pancratiasts, Gladiators, Wrestlers, Circus, Horse-races, &c.

Inferior Divinities, item ancient and modern Allegorical figures. (See Devices).

Abundance, Africa, Alexandria, Antiochia, Attention; Bengal; Great Britain; Bonus Eventus; Charity; Death, Skulls, Skeletons, Fortune, Friendship, Concord and Good Faith; Hope, Hours, Ireland, Justice; Liberty, Nemesis, Night, Nursia or Rumilia; Peace, Providence; Rome, Genius of Rome, Sicily; Sleep, Unanimity and Concord, &c.

Religious Ceremonies; Priests; undetermined Sacrifices; Victimarians; Altars; Sacred Instruments; Auspices; Augurs, Soothsayers, Herald.

B. Heroic Age before the Siege of Troy.

Prometheus, Epimetheus, Pandora, Pelops, Cadmus, Oedipus and Sphinx, Orpheus and Euridice, Zethus and Amphion, Phryxus and Helle, Argus and Argonauts, Jason, Medea and Aeson, Theseus, Pirithous, Centaurs, Minotaurus, Labyrinth, Phrya, Amazons, Dedalus and Icarus, Leander and Hero, Meleager and Atalanta,

Atalanta, Narcissus, Perseus and Andromeda, Medusa, Bellerophon, Pegasus, Chimera, Arimaspes, Griffins and Pigmies; War of Thebes, Tydeus, Capaneus, Peleus.

C. Siege of Troy.

Priam, Paris and Judgement of the Goddesses, Helen, Hector and Andromache; Iphigenia; Philoctetes; Laocoon; Achilles, Chiron Euripylus, Patroclus, Death of Achilles, Ajax and Ulysses; Ajax Telamon; Theano; Diomedes; The Trojan Horse; Cassandra; Ajax Oilcus; Polyxena, Pyrrhus; Ulysses; Syrens; Aeneas and Dido, &c.

D. Historical Age.

1. *History of Carthage, Carthaginians, Phenicians. Hanno, Hannibal, Masinissa, Juba.*

2. *History of Greece; Oibryades, Chabrias, Alcibiades, Phocion, Themistocles, Epaminondas; Alexander and Olympias; Pyrrhus King of Epirus; Jerome King of Sicily; Antiochus of Syria; Mithridates, Prusias, Ptolemies. Cleopatra. Kings and Queens unknown.*

Philosophers, Orators, Legislators, Founders of Cities, Poets, Illustrious Men, Greek and Roman, in alphabetical order. Unknown Philosophers.

3. History of Rome.

a. *Kings and fabulous History: Romulus, Tulus, Tarpejo, Tatius, Numa, Aeneas, Sibyls, Claudia, Tuccia, Curtius, &c.*

b. *Consular Heads and illustrious Men, in alphabetical order.*

c. *Triumvirates.*

d. *Emperors from Cesar to Julian.*

e. *Unknown Heads, Children, Consular, crowned.*

4. Historical Subjects unknown.

E. Fabulous Animals and Chimeras.

F. Vases and Urns.

II. MODERN

II. MODERN ART AND ENGRAVINGS.

A. Religious Subjects of the Old and New Testament.

Item Legends and Christian Allegory.

B. Portraits of Kings and Sovereigns.

C. Portraits of illustrious and celebrated Persons, in alphabetical order.

D. Portraits unknown.

F. Devices and Emblems.

G. Cyphers, Arms, Supporters, and Medley of modern History.

P O S T S C R I P T.

The preceding account was drawn up in the country, where I had more leisure than books, and I must observe, that what I said pp. 8, 11, on the art of turning, the drill-bore, the engraver's wheel, and Dedalus, wants an explanation from Pliny, to whose authority I referred only from recollection.

Pliny, speaking of the first inventors of many useful and ornamental arts (H. Nat. VII. Sect. 57, Edit. Harduini

Harduini, Tom. I. p. 414), mentions Dedalus and Theodorus from Samos, in one and the same sentence, as inventors of very different arts. He says: “*Fabricam materiariam Daedalus & in ea ferram, asciam, perpendiculum, terebram, glutinum Ichtyocollam; normam autem & libellam & tornum & clavem Theodorus Samino:*”——which is, “Dedalus invented the Carpenter’s tools, and in particular the saw, the plumbline, gimblet, and glue of Isinglass; but the rule, level, turning lade, and nails, were invenred by Theodore from Samos.”

Accordingly what I have said of Dedalus is to be understood of Theodore the Samian, and at any rate consistent with the practice and nature of the art of engraving, sculpture, and statuary. The very name of *Toreutick*, which in Greek is synonymous to turning, and is promiscuously given by the Greeks and Pliny to sculpture and statuary, strongly and invincibly implies, that the tools, instruments, and principles of the former, that is to say, the drill-bore and wheel, were applied by them, as they actually are by us in the latter; and as the Greek statues of marble, and other hard and brittle stones are the first in antiquity, that we know of, which appear animated, and moving their loose and detached limbs, arms, legs, and extremities, an advantage which cannot be obtained in marble without the above instruments; what reason or ground can we have to deny the Greeks of having first seen, and then applied, the invention of Theodore the Samian to sculpture, statuary, and the similar art of engraving?

That Pliny, in another place (H. Nat. XXXIV. c. viii), says of Phidias: “*Primus artem toreuticen*
“*aperuisse*

“aperuisse indicatur;” and of Polycletus; “toreuticen sic crudisse ut Phidias aperuisse;” implies no more than that these two great men, the one greatly extended, and the other fixed upon rule and principles the art of Toreutick, or statuary and sculpture, in which they both excelled.

Clowance,
Jan. 3, 1786.

R. E. R A S P E.

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F I N I S.

